

[Picketline]

NY SBH 12/13/39

Maritime Folklore

American Indian -Negro

This may be authentic transcription but it seems too unnatural.. Nothing in the text indicates that the speaker is a man of "American Indian-Negro background."

In other words, though it may - possibly IS - an actual transcription of a talk, it does not ring true, and hence falls flat.

No. [?]

FOLKLORE

NEW YORK Forms to be Filled out for Each Interview

FORM A Circumstances of Interview

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER Saul Levitt

ADDRESS 557 West 144th Street

DATE May 11, 1939

Library of Congress

SUBJECT Maritime Folklore

1. Date and time of interview

May 9

2. Place of interview

At Rockefeller Center. Picketline against Standard Oil Co.

3. Name and address of informant

Tom (?)

4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant.

5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you

6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc.

Peaceful day, one cop at the Rockefeller Center Bldg. Three pickets going up and down.

(Informant American Indian-Negro background. Complexion Negro, but features out in the pattern interviewer would say are Indian, aa American Indians are shown on pictures, nickels, calendars, etc. Very gentle-mannered, soft spoken)

FOLKLORE

NEW YORK

FORM C Text of Interview (Unedited)

Library of Congress

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER Saul Levitt

ADDRESS 557 West 144th Street

DATE May 11, 1939

SUBJECT Maritime Folklore

IT IS FULL OF SO MUCH COLORS

Mister, I do not know who you are and it will make no difference as you will see because though I am friendly and polite and you might be a stooge, what am I going to tell you? Well, I could tell you offhand what the sky looks like.

We are standing on this corner of 50th Street where we are picketing Standard Oil and it is quiet, isn't it, I would say it is a lovely and quiet day. All over mostly it is not bad and people are easy, simple, substanshual and there is no trouble for me only once in a while — well! I have had to put my head in the lion's mouth for a living but it does not pay to growl or grumble or complain and whatnot with all this that is going on and — well! Sometimes you are performing your work when one out of a half dozen or a few hundreds or a few thousands will interfere and will raise the cry about a man's color — well! That is a very sad and bad and hurting and painful thing to do to any man. I have been met everywhere 3 I have gone with salutations and greetings and have been received to the mos' extreme goodness and gladness and with courteous kindness because that is how I am everywhere. I am a sensible body. Caution and politeness are my rules. I was up in Berlin, I was up in Paris. In Japan they greeted me kindly. I observe the simple rules of bein' not intimidatin' so that I am never blamed for instigatin'. Living is full of personal difficult things and whatnot but there are few people who will turn against you if you are smiling and show a good face everywhere and do you understand me? In this Union

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and everywhere it's like everything throughout this whole big an' wide throughout an' big wonderful world. Everybody of course that I have observed would like to interrupt you when you are talking so that he finishes the sentence and makes the final statement. Well! Everybody is so extremely and always occupied that he does not see more'n the faces in other people. They do not know of anybody's burden of troubles. Yessir, do you see what I mean that everywhere it is mos' wonderful and beautiful that I do not understand this thing about black, black! or brown or green or purple or whatnot or don't they understand that free n' equal is the rule? Everywhere it is full of so much colors and so much to see that I do not understand it. Santiago, Oakland, Chicago, Brooklyn it is all the same though I bein' Californian love it mos' best because it is my native ground to me. It is got the mos' [?] sunlight glorious and wonderful! But I do not complain against other places all over and everywhere and 4 will give every man his chance. But there are few who grasp this and the [?] do not appreciate that it is just one lifetime and they will continually disturb you on the ships. I am polite everywhere and quiet, because if you are clever you mus' learn to keep quiet because it is other people who wants to use your strength. They will ride you but they do not want you around if you are clever. Well! This Union to my mind and my heart is the greates' an' mos' wonderful institution in this City that is the N M U and throughout other ports yes and on the Gulf and elsewhere. The N M U understands that there is only one lifetime here an' that is the most important thing to understand. I am without envy or jealous or in spite with people, young man and I will greet you again when I see you and at anytime and will eat with you and it will be pleasant. Because I will never throw bouquets at myself, never, but mos' everybody is my friend.